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PUBLIC INQUIRY: Key areas will be covered with regard to neurosurgeon Sam Eljamel.

Eljamel probe to ask seven key questions

BY JUSTIN BOWIE

The Eljamel public inquiry has set out the first draft of the crucial questions it intends to ask.

There are seven key areas which will be covered by the probe into the scandal surrounding the disgraced former NHS Tayside neurosurgeon, Sam Eljamel.

1 - Did NHS Tayside cover up the scandal?

The inquiry will explore whether NHS Tayside “concealed or failed to disclose evidence” of Eljamel’s butchery while employed by the health board.

The rogue doctor repeatedly botched operations and harmed patients over an 18-year period while working at Ninewells Hospital.

A review last August slammed Tayside chiefs and said more could have been done to protect patients.

The inquiry will also look at the health board’s management of records.

2 - Was Eljamel a bully and how did he treat colleagues?

The probe will interrogate Eljamel’s management and

treatment of colleagues, including whether he bullied or intimidated them.

NHS Tayside whistleblowers previously branded him a bully who was regarded as “untouchable”.

The inquiry also intends to look at accusations Eljamel left junior surgeons to carry out procedures on their own.

3 - How did NHS Tayside handle complaints?

The public inquiry plans to explore whether victims and staff were able to effectively complain about Eljamel. It will probe how NHS Tayside engaged with those who raised concerns.

4 - Were proper processes in place when Eljamel was hired?

The inquiry will ask whether appropriate checks were carried out before Eljamel was hired to work in Dundee in 1995.

It will also look at his appointment as head of department in 1996 and lead clinician for neurosurgery in 1998.

5 - How was Eljamel’s supervision and suspension handled by NHS Tayside?

NHS Tayside previously

admitted supervision of Eljamel in 2013 was inadequate due to a lack of input from senior leadership.

The neurosurgeon was never directly monitored in the operating theatre and carried out more than 100 procedures in just under six months.

6 - Did Eljamel deliberately hide his own wrongdoing?

The public probe will interrogate whether Eljamel “concealed or failed to disclose evidence of sub-standard professional practice” at Ninewells.

7 - How did Scotland’s healthcare agencies handle this?

The inquiry will explore the role of national healthcare bodies in the scandal.

A key goal of Eljamel’s patients is to make sure a scandal like this cannot happen again. Patients will meet inquiry chairman Lord Weir and leading counsel Jamie Dawson KC to discuss the inquiry draft terms of reference.

A spokesperson for the health board said it was committed to co-operating with the inquiry.